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ing. West didn't get out of the jeep way, it took three days. Finally they called mine and, uh, Jerry, my buddy, and Deke, another buddy of mine, called our names, put us on a C-130, and flew us up to Dong Ha. And I'm sitting on the runway at Dong Ha, waiting for a jeep to come and get me, right? And this green-box refrigerator truck pulls up. I'm thinkin', 'Wow! Beer and ice cream. This ain't so bad. And this forklift comes up, they open up the truck, they start lifting these big boxes out, start putting 'em on this airplane -- boom! -- it hits me: these are dead people. Dead Marines. Dead Americans. And I'm thinking, I gotta be here 13 months? I'm not going to live 13 months! How in hell can I, dumb 18-year-old stupid me, get killed 32 times in saying, how to beat am I going to live 13 months? I mean, you hatch Dan Rafter or whatever on the news, right? You see all you watch it in your living room and it's over there. It's not you.

But there you are? I mean, because the fact it's smelly and it's hot and you're scared, here's reality hitting you in the face. There's death here. Watching 'em forklift those... I just thought, Oh, man.

— D.S.

I don't know how many old helicopters they used, but they took a great number of us from the ship into Vietnam. And somehow my helicopter got separated. Other helicopters went, like, one way, ours went the other. I ended up in Dong Ha. Anyway, because of that, it took me another two days to hook up in Quang Tri. You know, get on a truck convoy, it's kind of crazy! All these signs: KILL 'EM ALL! LET GODS SEPARATE 'EM! signs pointing UNITED STATES this way, NEW ZEALAND that way. Shit like that. And I kind of saw, like, everybody walking around with their head cut off. But it was organized chaos. 'Trucks goin' this way, that way,

guys with skulls stuck on their faces. Others, like, just walkin' down the street. Anyway, I got there, checked in. And they tell me, "We been expecting you guys."

— D.R.

They needed trained intelligence people so badly that they pulled me out of school and sent me,

would... you just died. I ended up next to Marble Mountain. There was a hard-back tent area there. That spring they'd been hit by mortar fire that'd blown everything away, so they'd built a bunker in the center. It was six feet underground with heavy timbers and sandbags. That's where intelligence operated. We had a Marine outpost on the

tain. Damn, a RVN [Army of Republic of South Vietnam soldiers] were supposed to guard the damn thing. We started taking fire like gangbusters from automatic weapons. I jumped out firing an old M2 carbine. My driver fired an old grease-gun. His was so damn rusty I couldn't believe it worked. That was my first taste of bullets coming at me with To Whom It May Concern written on 'em.

— L.F.L.

We were in the Philippines on more jungle training. And I remember being in town on liberty really pissed off. I'd gotten rolled. Three women had been, you know, doing sexual stuff to me, stole my damn wallet. Must've been two whole bucks in there. Looking back now I think, Why can't that happen to me today? Three women ravaging my body? Stealing my two bucks? I mean, the irony of the whole thing. But then all of a sudden, the whole battalion got

rounded up. All liberty was cancelled. "Report back to duty immediately!" And we just blasted off for Vietnam, just to speed. I mean, I have vivid memories of being directly under the flight deck, where the elevator came down, of plastic falling off the ceiling. We were going so fast. This was a big time emergency. As soon as we got there, the operation began. Infantry companies just got slaughtered. I remember getting on one of those helicopters — the old helicopter not Hueys — thinking, We're gonna make it! I mean, you get off the flight deck and you go down. And you ride in the chair for a while, start to land, some body yells, "Get out!" And you jump. You don't know where you are. But I was told later we were in the DMZ.

— T.

My MOS was 7011 or SAT [Staff Airfield for Tactical Support]. You know, on the air

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